



The Virginia Saltwater Review

*Plans and Statistics Department
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Newport News, VA 23607-0756
<http://www.mrc.virginia.gov>*

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by

Department of Plans and Statistics, Fisheries Management Division

OVERVIEW

Last week, we asked for light winds, calm seas, and tight lines. One of our feature photos was of a happy couple holding up some nice keeper flounder at Captain Bob's Marina in Chincoteague. However, we received high winds, confused seas, and very few wetted lines, and the photos from Captain Bob's tell a different story, to include the temporary disappearances of a boat ramp and marina docks during the height of the storm.



At press time, the forecast for the upcoming weekend was for partly cloudy conditions, mid-70's for highs, and light winds switching from northwest to southwest. We'll just have to wait and see.

Fishing wasn't a total bust over the past week, as there were a few reports of notable catches, to include the continued strong drum bite along the Eastern Shore. Chris Snook at Chris' Bait and Tackle noted that anglers were hooking up on big black drum again this past Wednesday, and they have already issued close to 30 citations for black drum (citation black drum are greater than 46 inches or 80 pounds). This

is great news considering that this weekend is the 2nd Annual Black Drum World Championship, to be held at Bay Creek Marina in Cape Charles. As of Wednesday, there were 67 boats (teams) entered, totaling 336 anglers. VMRC Fisheries staff will be on hand to assist with the tournament and to weigh, measure, and collect otoliths (small bones used to age the fish) during the two-day event. Length and age data from the 2007 tournament has already been posted on the VMRC website at:

http://mrc.virginia.gov/rec_assessment/index.shtm

The 2007 age data for cobia, red drum, spadefish, and tautog donated through the Marine Sportfish Collection Project (page 9) has also been posted on the website.

Trophy striped bass reports had been coming in steadily before the most recent blow. Remember to report your trophy striped bass caught during the trophy fishery to VMRC (the trophy fishery began May 1) using either the forms provided (pages 7 and 8), or going online and registering your catch:

www.vasaltwaterjournal.com.

In 2009, there will be a coastwide (Virginia to Florida) stock assessment of the red drum population, and information is lacking on the catch-and-release of red drum outside of the management slot limit (18 to 26 inches). Even though the drum focus this weekend is on the black drum, don't forget that catch-and-release information on all red drum, big and small, are needed. You can provide length, general location caught, and how many through the Virginia Saltwater Fisherman's Journal (www.vasaltwaterjournal.com). See pages 10 and 11 for general details about the website.



THE FISHING REPORTS

Chincoteague –

Captain Bob's Marina saw the worst of the weather, according to pictures posted on the website (<http://www.captbobs-marina.com>). The storm's strong winds and high tides put everything under water, making it look like a tropical storm blew through. Piers were under water, along with the roads, parking lots, and pretty much everything else. Staff has spent the week doing repairs to bulk heads and piers. A few boats have gone out, along with some charters, but with the water so murky and full of debris seaweed seems to be what is found on most hooks coming out of the water. Donna hopes that the water will clear up, along with the weather, to make way for some good fishing as we look to the approaching holiday weekend.

Wachapreague –

The Wachapreague Marina is seeing some good flounder fishing, when the weather permits. One lucky angler landed a 29-inch speckled trout while fishing on the bayside. The catch weighed in at 8 pounds, 13 ounces. Wachapreague Marina has partnered up with the VMRC's Marine Sportfish Collection Project, and has received a project freezer for donations (see page 9).

Staff at Captain Zed's had a slow week due to weather, but a few anglers managed to make it out before the storms. Black drum are in the inlet, with a 52-pound fish caught over the weekend. Flounder are biting, with a few keepers coming in.

Cape Charles –

Chris' Bait and Tackle is still seeing intense black drum action, even with the gloomy weather. Staff issued between twenty and thirty citations, ranging from 46 to 51 inches. Soon as the weather cooperates, head out to Buoy 13 or 16 and get in on the action.

Onancock –

Captain Wil knows the fish are there, just need good weather to get out and catch them. Croaker are still out and about, as are striped bass. Red drum are showing up at the island. Very few opportunities for anglers to get out this week. Hopefully the winds will die down and give way to some great fishing.

Lower Bay/Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel –

Cobb's Marina has nothing to report, as it was too windy and unsafe for anglers to go out. Staff is hoping for improvement in the weather.

Staff at Salt Ponds Marina are still seeing some good flounder action, though strong winds and high gas prices have kept many anglers on dry land.

Sunset Boating Center reports very little activity due to the turbulent winds.

Staff from York River Fishing Center (formally A&S Feed and Bait Supply) reports a decent week of fishing. Flounder and croaker are plentiful at the Gloucester Point Pier, while the flounder are also making a showing in the York River. Fisherman's Island produced two catch and release citations for red drum. Brian Hess and Eric Cunningham (48-inch and 46 ½-inch, respectively) took a chance with the weather and were aptly rewarded.

Ken Neill, reporting secretary for the Peninsula Anglers Club, contributed the following:

The black drum bite is red hot. The red drum bite is not but it is still pretty good. Good catches of red drum continue to come from the seaside of the Eastern Shore. Fisherman's Island Inlet is still the best location. The black drum bite is just ridiculous with huge fish being caught in the buoy 13 and buoy 16 area. Chowder and sea clams are the top baits. Cobia are on their way. Fish have been caught out of Hatteras which usually means that some will be here in a couple of weeks. Memorial Day Weekend is typically the kickoff of our cobia season. Spadefish are here now though they have not been very cooperative yet. They should start to feed better as the waters warm a bit more over the next couple of weeks. Flounder fishing has been hit and miss with some good catches from around 36A, the seaside inlets of the Eastern Shore and around Back River Reef. Croaker are biting in the James and York Rivers. Speckled trout are available at all of the speckled trout spots though bluefish are making it a challenge to catch them. Some big striped bass are falling to live bait at the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. Offshore bottom fishing remains very good. A bit to our south, the tuna bite has really turned on out of Oregon Inlet. Good numbers of yellowfins and bigeyes are being caught

Dr. Julie Ball, IGFA Representative, Virginia Beach, contributed the following:

The drum scene is exploding in the lower bay, with the black drum rally taking the lead and the red drum procession leaping into place this week. The abundant catches of the docile black drum definitely reflects the peak of the black season, with up to 16 fish boated in one outing lately. A presentation of sea clams or chowder clams on Latimer Shoal, the Inner Middle Grounds, the 9 Foot Shoals, or Nautilus Shoal are the ticket lately for enticing these crustacean connoisseurs.

As the full moon cycle approaches this week, red drum catches are jumping into high gear as the these nimble hunters transition into a frenzied feeding mode. Both blue crabs and peeler crabs are working well, donned on a fish-finder rig. A 46-inch release will earn you a release citation from the state of Virginia.

The next news is the arrival of the first summer species. The graceful spadefish took residence in local waters this week, but don't expect much from these fish until the waters warm and clear over the next weeks. Look for the first big fish to show on the Cell, where the largest fish of the year are routinely landed.

Tautog catch and release continues from lower bay structures and coastal wrecks. Jumbo sea bass will also not disappoint, with some fish pushing over five pounds. These tasty fish will hit your offering on both offshore and inshore structures, with squid, shrimp, Fishbites and jigs producing the best results.

Virginia Middle Bay –

Capt. Jerry Thrash of Patriot Charters and Queens Creek Outfitters contributed the following:

Weather has minimized efforts at saltwater fishing. By now the flounder should be in their normal haunts around the Cell and up to Buoy 42 but there has been very little opportunity to confirm that. We did weigh in our first flounder citation of the year on Wednesday. The beauty was caught by Bill Battle of Port Haywood while fishing aboard the "Fish-R-Us" captained by E.W. Inge of Mathews. The fish was caught on cut bait at the Cell and measured 27 inches long and weighed 7 pounds, 8 ounces. Bill and E.W. reported they had seven keeper fish for their efforts. We weighed our first big speckled trout from the Hole-in-the-Wall on May 5th. Ed Poole of Richmond had two 19-inch speckled trout and a 4 pound, 4 ounces, 23.75-inch specimen, all caught on live minnows under popping corks. Some big croakers up to 16 inches are being caught between the Rappahannock River Bridge and Urbanna, but not in the numbers expected at this time of the year. Fish in the 10-14 inch range are being caught in the creeks.

Just about all the Marina reports for the last week are subdued due to the strong storms we have seen recently. The weather is starting to improve at the time of this report and the marinas stated that people were heading out to try their luck. A phone call might provide more up to date information regarding today's action.

Jetts Hardware reported the only fishing reports they had were from shore with croaker and small spot being landed.

Smith Point Marina saw citation size striped bass being caught on Saturday before the storms moved in and also keeper flounder being caught around the Smith Point Jetties and Light House.

Locklies Marina saw charter boats having some success catching croaker on the bottom.

Garrets Marina reports that the weather had people socked in till today.

Virginia Beach –

Virginia Beach Fishing Center reports bluefish, speckled trout, puppy drum (juvenile red drum), and flounder are congregating in the inlet. Private charters are out for bluefish, trophy striped bass, black and red drum, grouper, and tilefish. The headboat has been out for black sea bass.

Staff at Fisherman's Wharf Marina joins the club with other marinas. What do they all have in common? Wind, rain, and no fishing.

Virginia Piers –

Staff at the Ocean View Pier are seeing the most action after the sun goes down. Croaker, roundhead, and a few flounder come out as night falls.

Wind has put a damper on things at the Lynnhaven Fishing Pier, though the fishing is picking up as the week progresses. Spot, croaker, and roundhead are the catches for those daring the gusty winds.

The Virginia Beach Pier actually closed early due to inclement weather and actually saw the water temperature drop to 58° from 62° F. Over the weekend, a few bluefish were caught, along with roundhead.

Outer Banks, NC –

Nags Head Area to Oregon Inlet

Water temperatures, in the surf, have now reached 60° F. Fishing early in the weekend was good but the weather system that moved in Sunday kept fishing efforts to a minimum for a few days.

People fishing offshore continue to produce gaffer dolphin, wahoo, assorted shark species, yellowfin tuna, blackfin tuna, and bigeye tuna. Sizes on the bigeye tuna were running from 102 to 153 pounds. People working closer to shore were able to find striped bass and a few large red drum.

Piers and near shore fishermen had their best luck with sea mullet, blues and speckled trout. The bluefish bites were the strongest in the mornings with people working the Gotcha plugs seeing the best results. Sea mullet were hitting bottom rigs with almost any kind of natural bait you could put on a hook. The speckled trout fishing was on and off, but if you were fishing during the on periods you could do very well. Some of the specks were in the 3 pound class.

Inshore fishermen continue to target the speckled trout as well, especially around the Washington Baum Bridge, and many managed to catch their limits. Other species of note being landed were sea mullet and bluefish.

South of Oregon Inlet

It appears the red drum bite slowed down a bit during the past week, but the bluefish bite picked up. Big blues were reported around Ramp 44 and sea mullet were being landed at Ramp 38. Another report of a big cobia, 78 pounds, being landed from a boat was circulating around the web blogs as well.

Hatteras Inlet

Offshore conditions for people fishing out of Hatteras have been troublesome as well. On the days people could go out, gaffer size dolphin and wahoo were the main catches along with a few yellowfin tuna. Inshore fishing was also slow with a few puppy drum and bluefish.

If you have additional information or would like further details contact Joe Grist at (757) 247-2237.

Please credit the Virginia Marine Resources Commission's THE SALTWATER REVIEW as the source of the fishing information.

2008 STRIPED BASS RECREATIONAL TROPHY REPORT

FORM

**THIS REPORT MUST BE FILLED OUT AND MAILED OR HAND
DELIVERED TO VMRC NO LATER THAN JUNE 30, 2008.**

Each fisherman, captain, or boat operator is responsible for complying with all restrictions and requirements contained in regulation 4VAC 20-252-10 ET SEQ. Regulation 4VAC 20-252-10 ET SEQ. requires all striped bass kept during the trophy season be reported.

**** This page is for summary purposes only ****

FISHING SEASONS: Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries--May 1 (12:01 AM) - June 15 (11:59 PM), 2008
Coastal Virginia waters--May 1 (12:01 AM) - May 15 (11:59 PM), 2008
Potomac River tributaries--April 19 (12:01 AM) - May 15 (11:59 PM), 2008

TROPHY POSSESSION SIZE: 32-inch minimum; except for Potomac River Tributaries, where there is a 28 minimum.

POSSESSION LIMIT: 1 trophy-size fish per person. When fishing from a boat or vessel, where the entire catch is held in a common hold or container, the possession limit shall be for the boat or vessel and shall be equal to the number of persons on board, legally eligible to fish, multiplied by the applicable personal possession limit. The captain or operator of the boat or vessel shall be responsible for any boat or vessel possession limit.

GEAR: Hook and Line fishing only

NO SALE OF HOOK & LINE CAUGHT STRIPED BASS

NO POSSESSION of Trophy striped bass in the spawning reaches (defined below) May 1 through June 15.

- James River - from a line connecting Dancing Point and New Sunken Meadow Creek upstream to a line connecting City Point and Packs Point.
- Pamunkey River - from the Route 33 Bridge at West Point upstream to a line connecting Liberty Hall and the opposite shore.
- Mattaponi River - from the Route 33 Bridge at West Point upstream to the Route 360 Bridge at Aylett.
- Rappahannock River - from the Route 360 Bridge at Tappahannock upstream to the Route 1 Bridge at Falmouth.
- Alteration of striped bass while aboard any boat or vessel or while fishing from shore or pier so that total length cannot be determined is prohibited.
- Spearing or gaffing or attempting to spear or gaff striped bass is prohibited.
- Transfer of any striped bass to another person while on the water or while fishing from a pier or shore is prohibited.
- Striped bass fishing is prohibited in Federal waters (beyond the Virginia three-mile limit line).

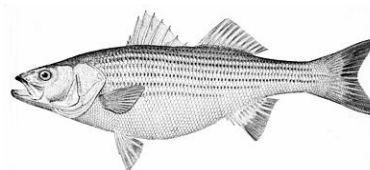
REPORT FORM HELPFUL HINTS:

- You must include length information on each trophy size striped bass that is kept.
- VMRC would appreciate any length information on striped bass that are released, please see the other side of this form.
- Lengths are total lengths in inches (to nearest 1/4 inch). Total length is measured in a straight line from tip of nose to tip of tail.
- Weights (in pounds) are optional
- TO REPORT REGULATION VIOLATIONS: 1-800-541-4646
- TROPHY REPORTING QUESTIONS: 1-800-937-9247

RETURN FORM TO:

**VIRGINIA MARINE RESOURCES COMMISSION
PLANS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT
2600 WASHINGTON AVENUE, 3RD FLOOR
NEWPORT NEWS VA 23607-0756**

On-line reporting is available:



www.vasaltwaterjournal.com

2008 RECREATIONAL TROPHY STRIPED BASS SEASON REPORT FORM

PLEASE PRINT ALL INFORMATION

NAME: _____

(USE AS MANY FORMS AS NECESSARY)

DATE	WATER BODY WHERE FISH WERE CAUGHT	NUMBER OF STRIPED BASS CAUGHT	NUMBER OF STRIPED BASS KEPT












MANDATORY - FISH KEPT			OPTIONAL - RELEASED FISH		
DATE	LENGTH to 1/4-inch (MANDATORY)	WEIGHT (IF AVAILABLE)	DATE	LENGTH	WEIGHT

**THE VIRGINIA MARINE RESOURCES COMMISSION
WANTS YOUR FISH....
TO MEASURE AND AGE.**

*You catch it, you fillet it,
but instead of throwing the remains in the trash,
please donate them to science.*



The Marine Sportfish Collection Project will focus on species of fish that are difficult to collect through the agency's normal sampling program. Anglers are asked to donate their filleted carcasses (head and tail intact) of legal and fresh-caught:

COBIA		RED DRUM	
SHEEPSHEAD		BLACK DRUM	
SPADEFISH		TAUTOG	
TILEFISH		GROUPE	
KING MACKEREL		SPANISH MACKEREL	
BLUEFISH (OVER 16 POUNDS OR 36 INCHES)			

In return for participating in the project, the agency will provide a **ONE FREE PROJECT TEE SHIRT or HAT FOR EACH PARTICIPANT, PER MONTH.**

Please visit these bait and tackle merchants to participate:

Bell Isle Marine (Hampton)

Chris' Bait and Tackle (Capeville)

Long Bay Pointe Marina (Virginia Beach)

Wachapreague Marina

Morningstar Marina – Gwynn's Island (formerly known as the Gwynn's Island Boatel)



Website: http://mrc.virginia.gov/rec_assessment/index.shtm

As of 05/16/2008





ATTENTION SALTWATER ANGLERS! **The Virginia Marine Resources Commission** **announces the**



Virginia Saltwater Fisherman's Journal

The Fisherman's Journal is a new tool that is intended to benefit the individual angler, the fishing community, and fishery managers. It allows the individual angler to keep a record of their fishing experience that can be used to identify successful locations and conditions in the future. It allows the fishing community to share and learn about other anglers' experiences. Finally, it will benefit fishery managers by allowing them to assess fish populations by analyzing data provided by you, the recreational fisherman.

Get Hooked and Report at
www.vasaltwaterjournal.com

Virginia Marine Resources Commission
Recreational Fishing Online Reporting

Virginia Recreational Assessment Program

Recreational Saltwater Fishing
Welcome Virginia Fisherman,

Report Trophy Striped Bass
Regulation 4VAC 20-252-10 ET SEQ. requires all striped bass kept during the trophy season be reported. Recording your trophy striped bass catch in this system meets Virginia's mandatory reporting requirement.

Saltwater Fisherman's Journal
The Fisherman's Journal is a voluntary online reporting system. By recording your catch, you will develop a history of your fishing trips that may help you plan future trips by identifying successful locations and conditions. For each fish reported, you can decide if you want to share your catch data with other members. Additionally, you are helping the VMRC gather anecdotal data of species prevalence in the Chesapeake Bay. Your personal information will not be used or associated to the catch data. Lastly, you don't have to rely on your memory. You can complete this report form during your trip and then enter it online when you return.

Search Public Data
Enter a search in this data base for the Fisherman's Journal

Related Links
[Commonwealth of Virginia](#)
[Governor](#)
[VMRC](#)
[License Requirements](#)
[Fishing Licenses](#)
[Artificial Reefs](#)
[Saltwater Fishing Tournament](#)
[Game Fish Tagging Program](#)
[Saltwater Regulations](#)

ATTENTION: VIRGINIA SALTWATER JOURNAL WEBSITE WILL BE UPDATED THIS WEEKEND!

You will now be able to report catch-and-release ranges, in addition to individual fish kept or released. Staff is updating the website to include this expanded tool, so that on those days that you catch 50 spot, can just report the 50 caught and a range of lengths. But remember, for more high profile species, such as Red Drum, Striped Bass, and Flounder (to name a few), individual measurements on caught and released fish places a greater value on the data you are providing.

WWW.VASALTWATERJOURNAL.COM

Fisherman's Journal - Mozilla Firefox

File Edit View History Bookmarks Yahoo! Tools Help

Address: https://192.168.0.15/vasaltwaterjournal/journal_entry.php

Search: Google

Bookmarks: Virginia Marine Resour..., mafmc.htm, SAFMC New Site > Ho..., NOAA Home Page, Atlantic States Marine..., Striped Bass Charter B..., CFLS, Virginia Marine Resou..., Recreational Fishing O..., Welcome to ACCSP

Identification of **launch site** will allow fishery managers to evaluate and update the Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey (MRFS) site register and thereby improve the data collected by the angler interviews.

Weather:

Seas:

Wind Speed:

Wind Direction:

Time of Day:

Moon Phase:

Air Temp (F):

Water Temp (F):

Number of Anglers Reporting For:

Hours Fished:

Notes:

To record your fish, click the "Add Fish" button below for each fish you intend to record. Record lengths in decimal format for partial inches (ex. 33.25). Total length is measured in a straightline from tip of nose to tip of tail. If you would like to make your catch data available to other anglers, ensure 'Make Public' is checked. To make your catch information only accessible to you(private), uncheck 'Make Public'. All catch data, both public and private, will be analyzed in aggregate by the VMRC and will never be associated with the individual angler.

Record Your Catch

*** Required Fields: Species, Qty, Length (Minimum length for released fish), Catch**

You may enter a size range for released fish. The minimum length is required. For kept fish, the length is required.

(1) Kept Fish

*Species: *Qty: *Length(inches): Weight(lbs):

Method: Bait: Tide: ☒ Make Public

(2) Released Fish

*Species: *Qty: Enter Length Range *Min Length(inches): Max Length(inches):

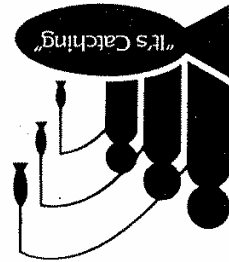
Method: Bait: Tide: ☒ Make Public

Done 192.168.0.15

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FIRST CLASS MAIL

TAKE A FRIEND FISHING



FISHERIES PLANS/STATISTICS OFFICE
VIRGINIA MARINE RESOURCES COMMISSION
2600 WASHINGTON AVE., 3RD FLOOR
NEWPORT NEWS, VIRGINIA 23607

Practice

CAREFUL CATCH

REDUCE STRESS FACTORS THAT KILL FISH

Exhaustion * Loss of Slime * Wounds * Time out of Water